

journalist. One of her goals: to get young girls out of prostitution. Ms. Garro is also a member of Ladies in Support, a group that pledges solidarity to the Ladies in White, which was founded by the wives, sisters and mothers of political prisoners in 2003 to work for their liberation.

In October 2010, Ms. Garro was detained by state security and held for seven hours. She emerged from the ordeal with a broken nose. Another woman taken into custody with Ms. Garro had her arm broken.

The nongovernmental organization Capitol Hill Cubans has reported that in the first 12 days of September, authorities detained 168 peaceful activists. These "express detentions" are designed to break up dissident gatherings, which risk spreading nonconformist behavior. Locking up offenders for long periods would be preferable, but the regime wants people like Mr. Richardson to go around saying that human rights have improved. The regime is also making greater use of civilian-clothed "rapid response" brigades that are trained, armed and organized to beat up democracy advocates.

Mr. Richardson told me he considers Cuba's record improved because 52 political prisoners were sent to Spain in 2010. Yet exiling promising opposition leadership hardly qualifies as a humanitarian gesture. Nor are gruesome Cuban prisons anything to ignore.

Last month in a speech in New York, one former prisoner, Fidel Suarez Cruz, described his seven years and seven months of solitary confinement, including two years and eight months in a cell with no windows, ventilation or artificial light. One favorite pastime of his torturers: Four military men would pick him up and then drop him on the floor. His testimony, posted on Capitol Hill Cubans website, is required viewing for anyone who doubts the evil nature of this regime.

Nevertheless, Cuba's dissidents remain relentless, and there are signs that the regime is giving up on the express-detention strategy. Fearless democracy advocate Sara Marta Fonseca and her husband Julio Leon Perez have been in jail since Sept. 24. Ms. Fonseca's son has seen her and says she is black and blue all over and has an injury to her spinal column. Word is the regime is preparing to charge the couple; 11 other dissidents are awaiting trial. Meanwhile, Yris Perez Aguilera, the wife of the prominent dissident Jorge Luis Garcia Perez "Antunez," and two peers were detained on Sept. 26. Their whereabouts are unknown.

Any hope of protecting these patriots lies in international condemnation. Mr. Richardson could help by returning to CNN to correct the record.

TRIBUTE TO MARY ELLEN NELSON

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, 18 years ago, Mary Ellen Nelson started in my Kalispell office. In that time, Mary Ellen earned the respect and admiration of her colleagues both in my offices across the State, in Washington, DC and with the Finance Committee. Staff always enjoyed getting the chance to talk with Mary Ellen and hear her words of wisdom. I have treasured her caring nature and thoughtful advice and am grateful for all her hard work over the years. It is important to note: my staff members don't just work for me—they work for all Montanans. Mary Ellen has served the young, the old, the successful, the downtrodden, and Montanans of all political stripes. It has been an honor to have her on staff and to work together for the State we cherish.

Working for VISTA is what brought Mary Ellen to Montana where she met and married her husband Ray of 34 years. A few years later they moved to Kalispell where she worked for the school system and the mentally disabled children of Flathead Valley before her work in the U.S. Senate. Mary Ellen's compassion to others resonates in her dedication to her family, community and the constituents of Montana. Mary Ellen has helped thousands of Montanans work their way through Social Security, Medicare, and other issues throughout the years. Her calm, nurturing character and commitment to helping others have benefitted thousands of Montanans throughout her 18 years of service.

A few years ago when Mary Ellen's two sons were graduating from college, I told her that graduations and weddings were important events and needed to be celebrated. The same is true of retirements. Mary Ellen will be enjoying her hours with her family, including her son Matthew in Kalispell, son George and daughter-in-law Monica in DC, her 90-year-old father, Leo Holland, and visiting her first grandchild Dominic who was born on Mary Ellen's birthday January 24 of this year. Mary Ellen, congratulations, good luck, and enjoy your retirement. Thank you for your many years of service in my office, the U.S. Senate, the community of Kalispell, and countless Montanans for your tireless work to help others. We are sure going to miss you, your talents, and your warm and accommodating personality.

Mary Ellen is proud of her Irish heritage so I would like to end with this Irish Retirement Blessing:

May you always have work for your hands to do.
May your pockets hold always a coin or two.
May the sun shine bright on your windowpane.
May the rainbow be certain to follow each rain.
May the hand of a friend always be near you.
And may God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL TRACEY L. WATKINS, USAF

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the service of COL Tracey L. Watkins of the U.S. Air Force on the occasion of his reassignment from the Air Force Congressional Budget and Appropriations Liaison Office and to say hail and farewell.

Colonel Watkins graduated from the Citadel in 1991 and since then has served in a variety of comptroller assignments across the Air Force. He has held leadership positions at all field and staff levels, including assignments in personnel, logistics, and operational planning. Colonel Watkins' time in the Air Force has included three joint tours: on the Joint Staff, as part of Combined Joint Task Force 76 in Uzbekistan, and in the Multi National Corps in Iraq.

Colonel Watkins' experiences in those tours were a benefit when he assumed the directorship of the Air Force's Congressional Budget and Appropriations Liaison Office. In that role, Colonel Watkins directed all Air Force appropriations liaison work on the Hill, including arranging key engagements for Air Force senior leaders with Members of Congress and helping to prepare their testimony during Appropriations Committee hearings. In each of those engagements, Colonel Watkins served as the Air Force point man for working with the Congress on all budgetary and appropriations issues. His office also supports congressional delegation trips and Colonel Watkins accompanied me on an important trip to Russia.

I have been impressed with many of the staff that Colonel Watkins led during his tenure as Director of the Air Force Congressional Budget and Appropriations Liaison Office, which I find to be the mark of an outstanding leader and manager. I am sure that my colleagues join me in expressing our appreciation to Colonel Watkins for his service to the Air Force and to the Congress. On the occasion of his reassignment to command the Mission Support Group at Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas, I wish Colonel Watkins, his wife Kelly, and his children all the very best in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO HOWARD FRANK MOSHER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, one of the great treasures of Vermont is Howard Frank Mosher. Mr. Mosher is a writer who knows and understands Vermont, and in books like "Where The Rivers Flow North," he makes any Vermonter know they are home.

A recent article in The Burlington Free Press by Sally Pollak speaks to the man he is, and I would like to take this opportunity to share this with the Senate.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD, the article to which I referred.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press]
ALL ROADS LEAD TO KINGDOM COUNTY
(By Sally Pollak)

(Vermont author Howard Frank Mosher has lived in the Northeast Kingdom since 1964 and the region is character-like in his books. Free Press Staff Writer Sally Pollak and Free Press photographer Glenn Russell spent a day traveling the roads in the north country with Mosher, listening to his stories and discovering his sense of place.)

IRASBURG—The tan Nissan rolling down the dirt road in Brownington came to a slow stop, and the man behind the wheel surveyed the shallows and grooves of mud in front of him. The place he wanted to go was on the far side of the mud pit, and up a small hill that curved out of sight.

Two men with trucks were on the other side of the mud ravine. The Nissan driver left his car to approach the men. I was in the

back seat of the Nissan. Glenn Russell, a Free Press photographer, had the front seat.

Through the window, we watched the three locals talk mud, and discussed if we'd try to forge the muddy road if we were driving. No way, I said.

Glenn said he might if he were Howard Frank Mosher, our tour guide that day. Mosher knows the people and trucks around here; he can always get a tow.

Mosher, meanwhile, had made another arrangement.

If he couldn't get to the other side of the mud, where Margery Moore, 91, his longtime friend lives, then Moore would come to him. One of the men Mosher had been talking to was her son, Michael; he'd pick up his mother in his truck and drive her through the mud to Mosher.

While we waited for Moore to arrive, Mosher, 68, told us stories. Delightful and engaging tales—warm and humorous, with a north country bite. The kind of stories you might read in his Kingdom County novels.

And now here we were, deep in the Northeast Kingdom on Moore Lane in Brownington, waiting to meet a woman of Mohawk ancestry, whom Mosher got to know 47 years ago, his first year in the Kingdom.

She showed up in a big blue rig to say hello. Her son lifted her from his truck and helped her into a wheelchair. Moore greeted Mosher with a hug.

He gave her a copy of his most recent novel, "Walking to Gatlinburg." After some talking, we headed back to the Nissan.

Michael Moore called to us as we walked to the car: "Don't let Howard lead you astray out here!"

To read Mosher is to be led, if not astray, then away—to a place that is, at once, invented and familiar, enchanted and real, made-up and true.

The truth can be found in Mosher's evocation of the place he calls Kingdom County, a rugged, rural border landscape where people scratch out hardscrabble livings, go without spring, learn to read the woods and rivers, build strong allegiances and cast a wary eye on newcomers. Mosher's county and the characters who inhabit it are informed by and created from the landscape and people around him: He uses for his material a place that is distinct and fascinating, yet one that's been changing—maybe merging with outer and other regions—even as Mosher put pen to paper; making it last.

In Mosher's 1999 novel, "The Fall of the Year," the book's central figure, Father George Lecoeur, is writing "A Short History of Kingdom Common." Mosher, too, is the author of a history of the Kingdom—his history is contained in the thousands of pages that make up his 11 books.

The words Mosher uses to describe "A Short History," can be applied to his own work. They are narrated by Frank Bennett, Father George's adopted son, as Frank settles down to read the history: "I could hear Father George's voice in my head, hear its slightly speculative, wry resonance. And at that moment, whatever else I still did not understand about the events of the past summer, I realized that long after the passing of the hill farms and the big woods and Kingdom Common as we had known it, these stories would remain: a golden legacy, to me and to the village, from Father George."

A SPECIAL PLACE

Mosher and his wife, Phillis, a retired teacher and school counselor, have lived in the Northeast Kingdom since 1964. It is where they raised their two children, Jake and Annie. Advertisement I was like a kid in the backseat on a recent drive to the hot spots of Mosher's adopted home turf.

The kid thing involved a surprise and recurring attack of carsickness: no fun! On the upside, it meant that as a passenger of Mosher's, even a newcomer from Burlington, I was given a free pass to the Kingdom, embraced by the old timers on Moore Lane.

Like a kid who (still) believes in the grownups up front, I saw the world through the eyes and observations of the driver—which thankfully transcended my own hazy vision. As we pulled out of the driveway of his Irasburg home, not far from the town green, Mosher enticed us. First stop, he said, was a place he'd had an "epiphany."

What and where it was, we'd find out when we arrived at the scene: Orleans' sleepy main street. This is going to be a fun trip, I thought. Anyone who can have an epiphany in downtown Orleans, is the right person to ride with.

The street was deserted the day Mosher steered his grandfather's Super 88 Oldsmobile into town. He and Phillis, farm kids from upstate New York barely in their 20s, were in Orleans to interview for teaching jobs.

The Kingdom quiet was busted that day by two rough-looking drunks in fisticuffs, fighting their way down the otherwise empty street. Mosher rolled down his window to speak a sentence that revealed the budding wordsmith within: "Could one of you gentlemen please tell me how to get to the high school?"

We'll do you one better, promised the brawlers. We'll take you there. With a welcome from Mosher, they climbed into the backseat of the Oldsmobile and directed the teaching recruits to the school.

"I was beginning to get the idea we had come to a special place," Mosher said. Just how special, was soon to be revealed: After the gentlemen disembarked from Mosher's car, Phillis turned around to peek at the two. She saw they had started punching each other again, and suggested Mosher take a look.

"Well, honey," she said. "Welcome to the Christly Kingdom."

RECITING FROST AT A COVERED BRIDGE

Kingdomy words like Christly—if there's another word like Christly—were flowing from the front seat, sprinkling my way that day.

Gool, Glenn said. What is that word?

It's a dam, Mosher said.

At least he thinks it is, and that's how he uses it. He picked it up from the locals many years ago; people talk about taking a walk to the gool after supper.

What about carcajou? Glenn asked.

"Wolverine," Mosher replied.

We talked about poems and poets and novels and writing that day in the car—and outside it, too.

At a covered bridge in Coventry, which Mosher noted with appreciation was set afire after it received historic designation, we talked about Kingdom colors and seasons, poised for change. The novelist recited a poem by Robert Frost: Nature's first green is gold, Her hardest hue to hold.

Her early leaf's a flower; But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.

So Eden sank to grief, So dawn goes down to day.

Nothing gold can stay.

Switching tenor and tone, Mosher launched into a story of a Depression era whiskey runner and friend who, fleeing the law, missed the curve at the bridge and wound up in the river. He hid in the river while the feds passed by on the bridge above, satisfied his thirst, and finally made his way to Barre.

Stories like these, which Mosher heard from Kingdom old-timers and which still

give him a kick, persuaded Mosher he had found his living and writing place. ("Imagine if Faulkner got here first," he said.)

WISE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM

Mosher found, in the woods and village, not just stories, but wisdom and guidance and important friendship—in particular from two people. As a pair, the two are as improbable as Mosher's talking turtle or spire-climbing tomboy.

James Hayford, who died in 1993 at age 79, was a Montpelier-born poet who settled in Orleans, where he had a teaching career. Hayford studied poetry with Robert Frost at Amherst College, and captured the life of his village in verse.

The memory of meeting Hayford, at a teachers' party in Orleans, is as vivid as the day his kids were born, Mosher said. Hayford, a scholar of Vermont, assured Mosher he would find his voice as a novelist.

Frost had assured Hayford he would find his poet's voice, Mosher said.

From Moore, a close friend, he heard real life stories of traveling in a boxcar with a menagerie of animals, of cooking in a lumber camp and waitressing in a dance hall. He heard a different voice assure him he'd find his way.

After her first marriage fell apart, Moore allowed herself to cry only after her sow's 13th—and final—piglet was born.

"Margie, my girl," she said to herself. "What have you done with your life?"

"And she told me that right when I was trying to figure out what to do with mine," Mosher said.

In their ways, characterized by a fierce independence of mind, Hayford and Moore are among the great people he has known, geniuses to some degree, Mosher said.

"They could've gone anywhere, done anything and been anything including president of the United States," Mosher said.

"What they wanted to do was live in the Northeast Kingdom."

Mosher spoke wise words of his own that day from the front seat. After asking if we'd like to stop for lunch at McDonald's—holy moley! McDonald's in the land of the localvores and I'm carsick!—Mosher said something I've passed on to my daughter.

He told Glenn and me he's never known a person who pursued an interest in the arts and regretted it.

But he could think of many people who turned away from artistic interests and talents, and did.

GO BACK WHILE YOU CAN

Teachers' pay wasn't so great in Orleans back in 1964, Mosher discovered not long after the drunk brawlers guided him to the school. By then, however, he'd had his first Kingdom epiphany—and that was clearly worth something.

Still, the working plan was to teach a few years, save money and go to graduate school. Was it possible on a salary of \$4,100, and less than that for Phillis? Sensing hesitation from the teaching recruits from upstate New York, the superintendent asked the couple if they fished. When they answered yes, he took them to the Barton River.

The trout were jumping that spring day, making their way up river.

"I looked at Phillis, she looked at me," Mosher said. The sight of the fish jumping the falls persuaded them to move to Orleans. They accepted the teaching jobs, and taught for a few years before moving to California, where Mosher planned to get his master's of fine arts in writing. He scrapped that plan after eight days, long enough for a truck driver to pull up to the Mosher's car at Hollywood and Vine in L.A., and deliver a message on seeing their green license plates. "I'm from Vermont, too," the trucker driver

said, "Go back while you still can." The stories Mosher wanted to tell were rich and ready and far from Hollywood and Vine. "I cut myself off from all my material before I understood it well enough to write about it," Mosher said. They headed home; Mosher to write, Phillis to teach. "We knew right away we had found a gold mine of stories," Mosher said. "And we found out nobody had written them. I couldn't believe it. It took me 15 years or so to begin to figure out how to do it."

Much of his first novel, "Disappearances," was written in the library/opera house in Derby Line, a granite and brick building that straddles the U.S.-Canada border. Mosher would place half his chair in the U.S., and half in the foreign country, when he wrote. He sometimes got such a kick from his own work, he created a disturbance. Or so the librarian thought. "I would burst into gales of laughter with each new outrageous passage," Mosher recalled. "'Mr. Mosher,' he was warned, if you can't control yourself, we will have to ask you to leave.'"

KEEP THE KIDS OUT OF THE MILL

Talking in hushed library tones in the dual nation reading room where he wrote *Disappearances*, Mosher said he was amusing himself during the writing of the book. "But I was also in a state of desperation," he said. "There's a degree of desperation about the writing."

Decades later, Mosher is amused by the response to "Disappearances" of Wallace Stegner, the famous novelist who lived in Greensboro. Stegner read Mosher's book to write a possible blurb for the cover.

Stegner, the story goes, didn't get too far before crumpling up the manuscript and throwing it in the fire, announcing: "This book is a hymn to irresponsibility."

"I didn't know enough to use it," Mosher said.

Mosher drove us past the place in Irasburg that would serve as a springboard for perhaps his best known story: the house where a black minister was living in the summer of 1968, when his home was shot at. The racial shooting, which came to be called the Irasburg Affair, informed Mosher's 1989 novel, "A Stranger in the Kingdom."

We visited, too, a place that will figure in the book Mosher is writing. His forthcoming novel also has a black man as a central character: Alexander Twilight, believed to be the first black person in the country to graduate from college (Middlebury, 1823).

We walked outside the wonderful stone schoolhouse, reminiscent of the Middlebury campus, Twilight designed and built on a quiet plateau in Brownington. Twilight was principal of the school, and a minister and state legislator.

"He had a dream," Mosher said of Twilight.

"There's no doubt about it."

When the Moshers started teaching in Orleans, they were instructed by the district superintendent to "keep the kids out of the mill." The administrator was referring to the Ethan Allen furniture factory, which appears in Mosher's novels as American Heritage.

Mosher, whose first apartment was next to the mill, said he heard the words "keep the kids out of the mill; keep the kids out of the mill" rise in rhythmic chant from the plant's vents outside his window.

It is unlikely the long-ago superintendent, issuing that directive, had in mind the manner by which Mosher would fulfill the mandate. But any Kingdom kid who has found his way to Mosher's novels, is transported to a place that is true to the mill, and the river nearby, yet worlds apart and away.

TRIBUTE TO JACK WILLIAMS

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Jack Williams of Boston, MA. For the past 30 years, Jack, a well-respected veteran news anchor, has hosted WBZ-TV's "Wednesday's Child", the longest-running adoptive-family-recruitment TV feature in the Nation. Since "Wednesday's Child" first aired on WBZ in 1981, Jack Williams has used the weekly news segment to tell the story of more than 1,000 special needs children who are in need of loving, safe and permanent homes. Thanks to Jack's effort, many of these children have found "forever" homes with viewers of the weekly segment.

Jack Williams has used his notoriety and public platform to provide an invaluable service that has changed the lives of so many children and their adoptive parents. "Wednesday's Child" is backed by the Endowment for Wednesday's Child, an exemplary nonprofit with very little overhead and no employees. In fact, Jack and Marcie are the sole employees of the Endowment for Wednesday's Child; they have never drawn a salary and run the foundation out of a home office.

The Endowment for "Wednesday's Child" is supported by individual and corporate donations including Wendy's Restaurants, as well as Volvo, which donates a vehicle for the "Win a Volvo, Help 'Wednesday's Children'" campaign. The endowment has raised and donated millions to worthy nonprofits that assist with special needs adoptions. Among these are the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange and group homes including the Walker Home, St. Ann's Home in Methuen and the Italian Home for Children in Jamaica Plain.

I also thank WBZ-TV for being exemplary stewards of the public airwaves in allowing Jack to use his position for such a noble cause.

On November 6, the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange, other Wednesday's Child beneficiaries and Wednesday's Child "alumni" will gather to honor Jack Williams' 30 years of service to Massachusetts' foster children in need of permanent homes. I join them in congratulating Jack and Marcie and all those who support Wednesday's Child for their hard work and generosity.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CORPORAL DAVID J. BIXLER

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I honor Corporal David J. Bixler for his courage, heroism and selfless dedication to the U.S. Army and his fellow soldiers.

CPL David J. Bixler of Harrison, AR, recently received the United Service Organizations Soldier of the Year Award for distinguishing himself both on the battlefield and during his recovery

from the wounds he received from his actions during a firefight in the Arghandab River Valley of Afghanistan.

On September 30, 2010, Corporal Bixler and his platoon conducted a patrol in the volatile and dangerous region to talk with some local elders. During the mission, Corporal Bixler was assigned a small team of Afghan National Army soldiers to lead. The patrol came under heavy enemy fire forcing the unit to turn back to safety.

Corporal Bixler's following actions are heroic and inspiring. As the patrol turned around, one of the Afghan Army partners stepped outside of the cleared path and Corporal Bixler, recognizing the danger ran after the Afghan soldier. As he attempted to shove the soldier back onto the cleared path, he detonated an IED that caused extensive damage to his body. Through this courageous and selfless action, he saved the life of the Afghan soldier and the other members of his patrol. For his heroism, he was awarded the Silver Star.

Throughout his difficult recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Corporal Bixler has been an inspiration to those around him and to his unit that continues its service overseas.

CPL David Bixler has not only met the criteria for the Soldier of the Year Award, but eclipsed it. Words cannot express how proud I am of Corporal Bixler and his valor and bravery now how grateful I am for his service. We thank him, and all our servicemen and women, for their sacrifice and efforts on our behalf.●

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today I wish to commend the American Academy of Arts and Sciences on the occasion of the institution's October 1, 2011, induction ceremony for the 231st class of members in Cambridge, MA. These 211 new members earned election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences for extraordinary individual achievement and are among the world's most influential artists, scientists, scholars, authors, and institutional leaders. In accepting membership into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, these individuals agreed to contribute their talents, experience, and knowledge to help the academy advance the Nation's social welfare.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences is an august, quintessentially American institution founded by Massachusetts' own John Adams and other scholar-patriots during our Nation's struggle for independence. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences is currently chaired by Louis W. Cabot and led by President Leslie C. Berlowitz and is a vital center of knowledge focused on the great challenges and concerns of the day, from science and technology policy to global security; social policy to the humanities; and culture, and education.